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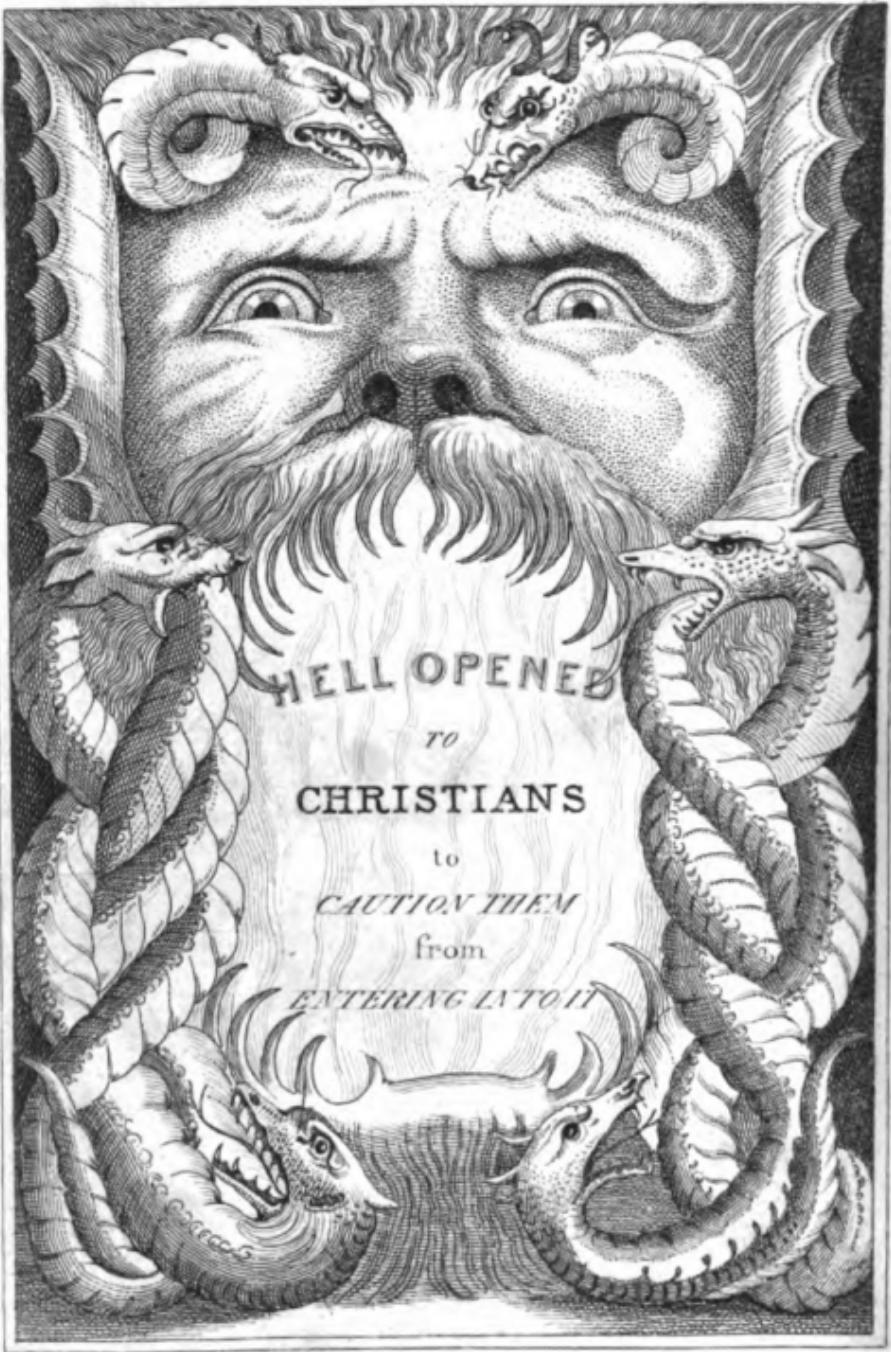
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HELL OPENED

to

CHRISTIANS

to

CAUTION THEM

from

ENTERING INTO IT

HELL OPENED
to
CHRISTIANS.

Published with Authority.



*I was the brother of dragons and fellow of
ostriches. Job 30:29.*

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HELL OPENED

TO

CHRISTIANS;

TO CAUTION THEM

FROM ENTERING INTO IT:

OR,

CONSIDERATIONS

ON

THE INFERNAL PAINS,

Proposed to our Meditation to avoid them:

AND

DISTRIBUTED FOR EVERY DAY IN THE WEEK.

WRITTEN IN ITALIAN

BY F. PINAMONTI, S. J.

Let them go down into Hell living, Ps. liv.
That they may not go into it when dead.

S. B. ad Ir. de Minte Del.

WITH LAWFUL AUTHORITY.

DERBY,

AND 172, FLEET STREET, LONDON;

THOMAS RICHARDSON AND SON,

FOR THE CATHOLIC BOOK SOCIETY.

1845.

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TO THE READER.

WANT of thought and ignorance are so near allied, "Inconsideratio et ignorantia æquiparantur," that the one is often taken for the other; and in law they carry much the same force; and what is more, holy writ assigns to both the same effects; that ruin, therefore, which in *Job* is ascribed to ignorance, "Quia nullus intelligit in æternum peribunt," c. iv. v. 20, is, by the Holy Ghost in *Jeremy*, attributed to want of thought and reflection. "Desolatione desolata est omnis terra, quia nullus est qui recognitet corde," c. xii. v. 11. It is no wonder then that sinners, though by faith they know there is a hell for them, still sin on, as if they knew it not, because they do not reflect on it. "Quid causæ, ut si quisquam christianus futura eredit, futura non timeat? Si eredit, quæ dixit Deus, non timeat quæ

minatur Deus," *lib. 5. de Eccl. Cath.* The holy bishop Salvianus was abashed at this reflection, as not conceiving how a christian could believe things to come, and not dread them; could believe what God said, and yet not fear what he threatened. It is a great prodigy, said he, to believe an eternal punishment designed for the wicked, and yet to rest quietly in sin. The reason of this is given by St. Ambrose; "Nihil timent, quia nihil vident; they fear nothing, because they see nothing;" sinners do not fear, though they believe, because they shut their eyes to all serious consideration of things to come, and only open them to what is present; so that they are like unto asps which have their eyes on their temples; they see what is on both sides of them, but not what comes in front, or lies in wait for them: "They fear nothing, because they see nothing;" otherwise how is it possible there should be a hell, and sin at the same time? a great fire consumes all contagion. "Remember thy last things, and thou shalt not

sin for ever." "Memorare novissima
in æternum non peccabis," *Eccl. vii.*

What can there be better devised to shut this abyss of punishment to the dead, than the opening of it to the consideration of the living? St. Catharine of Siena, through an excess of zeal, wished she could place herself in the mouth of hell to shut up its passage, at her own cost, that no more souls, redeemed by her beloved Spouse, should fall into it. I, who have not so much fervour, intend at least to lay this little book in your way, begging of our Lord, from my very heart, to give it so much force, as to shut up, to some one or other, that immense gulf, which is never tired with devouring. "Infernus dilatavit animam suam, et aperuit os suum absque ullo termino," *Isa. v.* And because thou, O reader, art the person, whom, before all others, I desire to gain; to thee it is, in the name of thy soul, so much forgotten by thee, that I dedicate these few leaves, begging thou wouldest every morning find some little time to read and digest

these truths for thy great good. I have divided them into as many considerations as there are days in the week ; and every consideration into three points, that this distinction might render them less tiresome, and the order make them more clear. And because our senses often flag and betray us, when we are to soar at things above them, I am resolved to engage them in favour of the soul ; as now and then is done by arming banditti in case of necessity for the common defence. I have, therefore, prefixed at the head of each consideration a picture representing in some kind the infernal torments ; by which the eye and fancy may be employed, and the discourse helped, rather than hindered. At first, therefore, fix thy eye very attentively on it, and imprinting it in thy mind, say to thyself, If this, which is only a bare sketch of the painter, be so frightful, what are those torments which are originals made by the hand of God ?

I do not believe you can ever think that things in these papers have been any ways

exaggerated; but in case you should, remember that the torments of the other life are supernatural, and, therefore, wholly above the reach of our understanding, and inexplicable by our tongue; and as there is no eye that has ever seen, nor ear that ever heard, nor heart that ever conceived any thing like the glory which God has prepared for those who serve him; so there is no eye, ear, nor heart, which can receive a true idea of the punishment which God has prepared for those who offend him. “*Altitudinem cœli et profundum abyssi, quis dimensus est?*” *Ec. i.* The good and evil of the life to come, exceed, beyond all measure, those of this present state, both as to their continuance, as well as their intensesness, “*Quicquid vis, dicis de æternitate, quia quicquid dixeris, minus dicis,*” *Aug. Ps. ix.* “Say what you will,” says St. Augustine, “of eternity; for whatever it is, it will be too little.”

Rather than to give way to so foolish a persuasion, as to believe the things repre-

sented here exceed the truth, endeavour to conceive such a fear as may render you secure; for, "Qui pavet, cavet, qui negligit, in ea incidit," *Serm. ad Cleric. c. 4.* "He that feareth," says St. Bernard, "takes care; he that neglects evils, falls into them.

To be able, therefore, to receive a due impression, first, recommend yourself by some short prayer to the Holy Ghost, to the blessed virgin, to your angel guardian; then entertain yourself for some time with the meditation, weighing at leisure every particular, and not superficially running it over at first sight. If in the course of that day, the devil, by some evil suggestion, or a companion worse than himself, should, by some wicked insinuation or example, assault you, oppose in your own defence, the meditation you made in the morning, recalling it immediately to your memory. Shall not that great thought, "Magna cogitatio," as St. Augustine calls it, which has given to the church so many martyrs, so many hermits, so many religious virgins and peni-

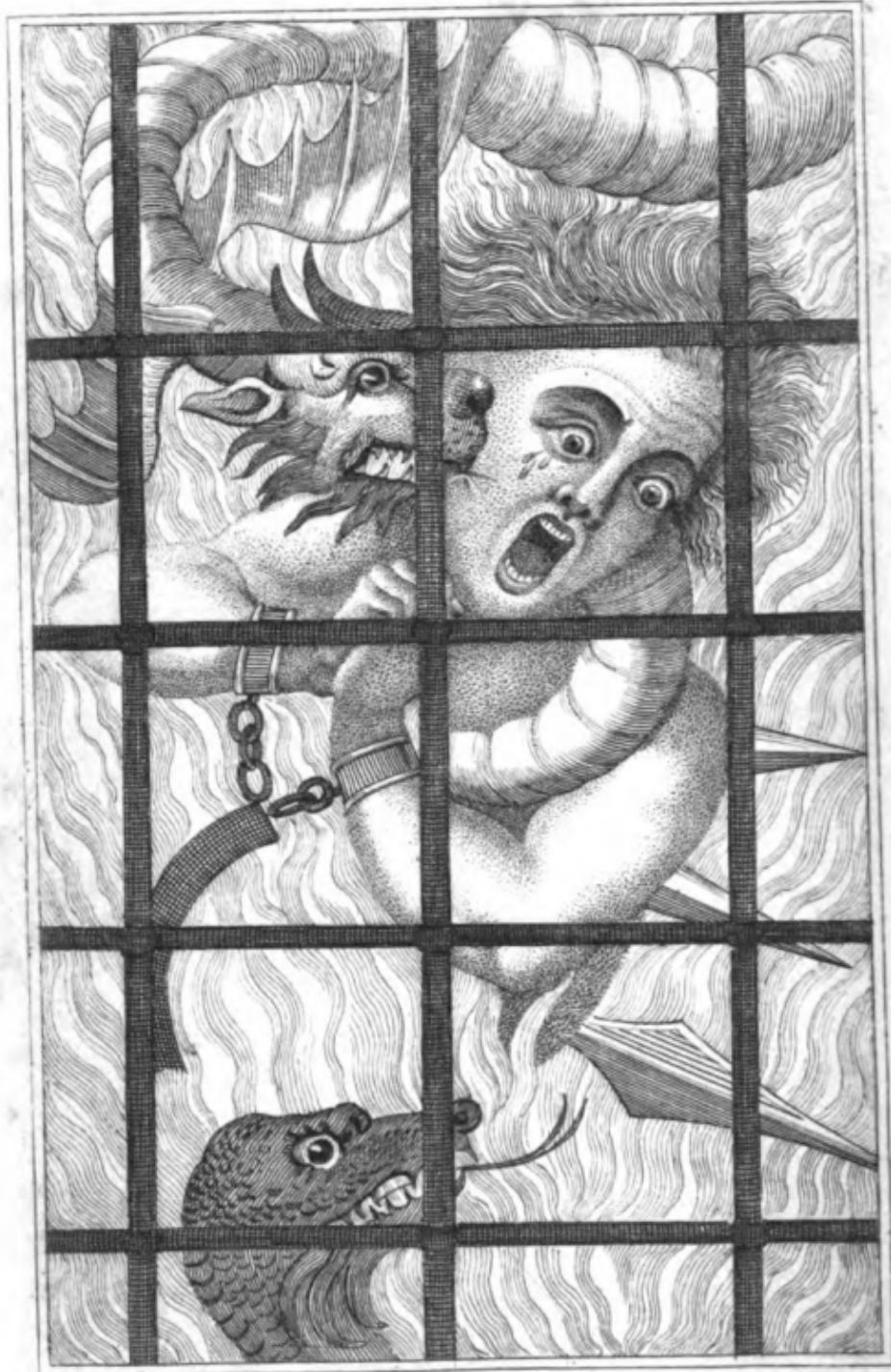
tents, inspire you with so much courage as to condemn one moment of pleasure to avoid an eternity of misery? I hope that if other remedies have been without success, this at least may help you; and if this does not, I know of none that will. "Quod non sanat medicamentum, sanat ferrum, quod non sanat ferrum, sanat ignis, quod non sanat ignis est insanabile." "That wound which cannot be healed by gentle applications, must be cured by incision, if that fails it must be done by fire, and what is not cured by fire must be looked upon as incurable."

Finally, because prayer is the chiefest means which the divine providence affords us for our good, therefore, to obtain that grace, which of all others is the most conducing to avoid eternal damnation, there is a proper form of prayer assigned for every day, to put us in mind of the advice our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ left us on this subject: "Watch at all times, praying that ye may be made worthy to avoid all

those things, and stand before the Son of Man." "Vigilate omni tempore orantes, ut digni habeamini fugere ista omnia, et stare ante filium hominis," *Luc. xxi.* Have a guard always upon yourselves, opening your eyes by a serious consideration, beginning to be made worthy to avoid so great an evil, as is the being eternally damned, and to enjoy so great a good, as is the possessing of heaven for ever.



The Prison of Hell.



The bars of the Earth have shut me up.
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for ever Jonas. 2. 7.

THE FIRST
CONSIDERATION:
FOR SUNDAY.

THE PRISON OF HELL.

ITS STRAITNESS.

I. CONSIDER, That the first injustice a soul does to God, is the abusing the liberty granted her, by breaking his commandments, and in effect, declaring not to be willing to serve him: "Dixisti, non serviam." *Jerem. ii.* "Thou saidst, I will not serve." To punish, therefore, so great a boldness, God has framed a prison in the lowest region of the universe, a very suitable place, as the farthest of all from heaven. Here, though the place itself is wide enough, the damned will not even have that relief, which either a poor prisoner has in walking between four walls, or the sick man in turning himself in bed, because here they shall be bound up like a faggot, and heaped upon one

another like unfortunate victims; and this by reason of the great numbers of the damned, to whom this great pit will become narrow and strait; as also because the fire itself will be to them, like chains and fetters. “Pluet super peccatores laqueos: ignis et sulphur, et spiritus procellarum pars calicis eorum.” *Ps. x.* “He shall rain snares on sinners: fire and brimstone, and the spirit of storms will be part of their cup.” Besides, God will not concur with any thing that can give them any manner of relief: making no more account of them, than if they had never been in the world; and, therefore, “obliviscatur ejus misericordia,” *Job xxiv. 21.* “Forgotten by his mercy.” Those miserable wretches will not only be straitened, but also be immoveable; and therefore “if a blessed saint,” says St. Anselm, in his Book of Similitudes, “will be strong enough, should there be occasion, to move the whole earth; the damned will be so weak, as not to be able even to remove from the eye a worm that is gnawing it.” The walls of this prison are more than four thousand miles thick, that is, as far as from hence to hell; but were they as thin as paper, the prisoners will be too weak to break

through them to make their escape. "Ligatis manibus et pedibus ejus, mittite eum in tenebras exteriores." *Matt. xxii.* "Binding him hand and foot, throw him into utter darkness." What, then, will that sinner do, who was accustomed to command and have every thing done his own way, even in despite of God himself, when he finds himself shut up in so deep an abode, under the feet of all creatures, even the devils themselves, never to recover, for a whole eternity, that liberty which was so dear to him? Oh detestable liberty, which endeth thus in a slavery that has no end! How much better would it have been to have submitted one's self, for a short time, to the pleasant yoke of divine precepts, than to live for ever chained up in such dismal fetters!

ITS DARKNESS.

II. CONSIDER, that this prison, will not only be extremely strait, but also extremely dark. It is true there will be fire, but deprived of light; yet so that the eyes shall suffer with the sight of most horrible appearances, and yet be debarred of the

comfort which in the midst of all their terror, the lightnings themselves might cause in the frighfulest tempests. “Vox Domini intercidentis flammam ignis.” *Ps. xxviii.* That will be true, because, as St. Thomas says, “Ibi erit ardor fine claritate,” “There will be heat without brightness,” by a contrary miracle to what was wrought in the Babylonian furnace, for there, by the command of God, the heat was taken from the fire, but not the light or brightness; but in hell the fire will lose its light, but not its heat. Moreover, this same fire burning with brimstone will have a searching flame, which being mingled with the rolling smoke of that infernal cave, will fill the whole place, and raise a storm of darkness according to what is written, “Hi sunt quibus procella tenebrarum servata est in æternum.” *Judæ. xiii.* “These are the persons to whom the storm of darkness is reserved for ever.” Finally, the same mass of bodies heaped on one another, will contribute to make up a part of that dreadful night; not a glimpse of transparent air being left to the eyes of the damned, thus darkened and almost put out. *S. T. 4. dist. 50. q. 2, a. 3.* Ponder now the despair of a sinner

buried in this manner: "Usque in aeternum non videbit lumen." *Ps. xlviii.* "He shall not see light for ever." Oh, poor wretch, who for a whole eternity shall not so much as behold one single ray of any friendly light! One night alone has sometimes made a poor prisoner turn quite grey. What effect then must that night, which shall never see day, cause in those unfortunate creatures? "Factæ sunt tenebrae horribiles," *Exod. x. 22.* Amongst all the plagues of Egypt, if darkness alone was called horrible; what name shall we give to that darkness, which is not to last for three days only, but for all eternity!

ITS STENCH.

III. CONSIDER, how much the misfortunes of this prison, so strait and obscure, must be heightened by the addition of the greatest stench. *S. Th. in 4. dist. 47. q. 2, a. 2.* 1stly. Thither, as to a common sewer, all the filth of the earth shall run after the fire has purged it at the last day. 2ndly. The brimstone itself continually burning in such prodigious quantity, will cause a stench not to be bore. 3rdly. The very bodies of the

damned will exhale so pestilential a stink, that if any one of them were to be placed here on earth, it would be enough, as St. Bonaventure observes, to cause a general infection. "Decadaveribus eorum ascendet fætor," *Isa. xxxiv. 3.* "A stench shall arise from their carcasses," says the prophet, for so he calls them, though they are living bodies, and will continue so, as to the pain they shall suffer; but at the same time are worse than carcasses as to the stench that will come from them. The devil appearing one day to St. Martin with purple robes and a crown on his head; (*Sever. Sulpit. in vit.*) "Adore me," said he, "because I am Christ, and deserve it;" but the saint, assisted by a celestial light, answered him, saying, "My Lord is crowned with thorns and covered with blood, I know him not in this new dress." The devil being discovered, fled away, but left so great a stench behind him, that this alone was sufficient for the saint to discover him. If then one single devil could raise such a stench, what will that pestiferous breath be, that shall be exhaled in that dungeon, where all the whole crowd of tormenting devils, and all the bodies of the tormented, will be penned up together. Air

itself, being for a time closely shut up, becomes insupportable: judge then what sink of such loathsome filth must be to those that are confined in it for ever. This is the habitation which sinners voluntarily choose for ever, provided they satisfy with a short dream the infamous desires of their corrupted flesh. These are the proud palaces, which they who despise the poor, and turn them away as loathsome, have built for themselves by their haughtiness. Heaven, bought with the blood of the Son of God, and therefore never sufficiently to be valued, is changed for this prison. Oh unfortunate change! Oh change that will be lamented with a flood of tears, but that in vain for ever. "Mortuus est autem et dives, et sepultus est in inferno." *Luke xvi. 22.* "The rich man died, and was buried in hell."

A PRAYER

TO THE ETERNAL FATHER TO AVOID HELL.

O HEAVENLY Father, Lord of immense greatness, and incomprehensible Majesty! What abyss can contain so many torments as will equal the number of my sins, or my

boldness in rebelling against thee, and living according to my own perverse inclinations? It were convenient, that power, by which thou raised me out of nothing, and continueth every moment to preserve me, should be employed in making a new hell, and a more cruel prison, to be more proportionable to punish my wickedness. It is true, I own it; but if I have left being thy son, thou hast not left being my Father. To thee, therefore, I have recourse, and from the bottom of my heart I humbly crave thou wouldest not destroy me, who am a sinner, but rather destroy the sin which is in thy wretched creature, by granting me thy pardon, and freeing me from all evil. This is a work wholly worthy of thee, to overcome my malice by thy goodness, and take out of the world this great monster of my iniquity: if thou condemnest me, I shall die, it is true; but my malice will live for ever in those flames. “Tuus sum ego Domine, salvum me fac,” *Ps. cxviii. 94.* “Remember, therefore, that I am thy creature, and that thy hands made me according to thy image, save me then, O Lord, for I am thine.” If I do not deserve it, thy divine Son does, whom thou hast given

The Fire.



My inner parts ^{Google} have boyled without any rest

me for a Redeemer. Turn my eyes from my sins, and fix them on him: behold those infinite merits which I offer thee to satisfy for my debts, and to obtain so much help, as never to sin more; but that in serving thee faithfully to the end, I may deserve a place in heaven, where, with the saints, I shall bless thee, and thank thee for ever and ever. Amen.

THE SECOND
CONSIDERATION: .
FOR MONDAY.

THE FIRE.

ITS QUALITY.

I. CONSIDER, that the divine justice has chosen fire as the fittest instrument to punish those that rebel against God. Even among men there never was found a greater torment: "Tormentorum ultimum." *Curt.* i. 6. It is, therefore, with reason called the greatest of all. Nevertheless you must not

think the fire of hell is like ours. Happy, I say, would those unfortunate souls be, if they met with no other fires, than what can be made on earth. The rich man mentioned in the gospel, does not barely say he was tormented by fire; but “crucior in has flamas,” “in this flame,” expressing in some kind the different quality of the infernal flames. Our fire is created for the benefit of man, to serve him as a help in most arts, and for the maintaining of life; but the fire of hell was only created for God to revenge himself of the wicked. “Vindicta carnis impii ignis.” *Eccl. vii. 9.* Our fire is often applied to subjects not at all proportioned to its activity; but the fire of hell is kindled by a sulphurous and bituminous matter, which will always burn with an unspeakable fury, as it happens in the thunder-bolt, which strikes with so much force, caused by the violence of that lighted exhalation. “Pars illorum erit in stagno ardente igne et sulphure.” *Apoc. xxi.* “Their part shall be in the burning lake with fire and brimstone.” Finally, our fire destroys what it burns, therefore, the more intense it is, the shorter it is; but that fire in which the damned shall for ever be tor-

mented, shall burn without ever consuming; and is, therefore, by Christ compared unto salt, "Omnis enim igne salietur," *Marc. ix.* 49. "For every one shall be salted with fire," which torturing them with inconceivable heat in nature of fire, will also hinder them from being corrupted, as it is the nature of salt to do. If a little flame of our fire so much frightens us, if we cannot bear never so little a while the flame of a candle, how shall we be able to be buried for ever in flames, whose violence exceeds all imagination? O thou, who hast not as yet repented for the sins thou committedst last; thou knowest by faith that if thou wert to die at present, thou wouldest fall into that eternal furnace; how canst thou then find in thy heart to lay down this book before thou beggest pardon from thy heart for thy sins? how canst thou have the courage to continue, I will not say months, but even one moment, in the state of one condemned to hell? "Potes hoc sub casu ducere somnos?" "how canst thou laugh, how canst thou sleep at rest?"

ITS QUANTITY.

II. CONSIDER, what strength this devouring fire will have, on account of the great quantity thereof. This infernal prison being to contain all the bodies of the damned, without being compenetrated one with another: it will be requisite it should be a pit of many miles in circumference, depth, and height, considering the great number of its prisoners. “Infernus dilatavit animam suam, et operuit os suum absque ullo termino,” *Isa. v. 34.* “Hell has enlarged its soul, and opened its mouth without any limit.” Now all this great pit will be full of fire: and if lighted straw, when there is enough of it, will heat an oven, what will lighted brimstone do, so violent as to quantity, and so great as to quality? besides, the fire here will be shut up without any vent, and, therefore, all its flames will return back by reverberation, and, by consequence, be of unspeakable activity. Who is there that can doubt, that if a whole mountain were thrown into this great furnace, but that it would melt as soon as a piece of wax? This the devil was forced to own, being asked by a soldier, *Cæsarius apud Collat. dist.*

6. ex. 89. And without his testimony we have the irrefragable saying of the Holy Ghost, that assures us of it, in the 28th Psalm, calling it, " Flamma comburens montes." " A flame burning mountains." And yet sinners, instead of being frightened, make a jest of these flames, and are no more concerned at them, than if they were bonfires. " Licet ignis ille exæstuet, et fluvius flamma accendatur, nos tameu ridemus et delicias amplectimur." *Hom. 55. ad. Popul.* " Though that flame burns, and a river is set on fire, we still laugh and follow our delights," says St. John Chrysostome, full of astonishment: holy Job said, " Nec fortitudo lapidem fortitudo mea, nec caro mea ænea est." *Job vii.* " His strength was not like that of stone, nor his flesh of brass ;" yet if thine were of stone and brass, it would in a moment be melted in that fire in which thou art to live for ever, in case thou dost not detest and abandon thy wicked life. I have said little, it is true, in saying thou wert to live in that fire for ever ; I ought to have said, that both thou and I, if we do not fear and love God, shall be like fire itself ; because that flame so fierce and so great will not only afflict us without,

as it happens with the fires in this world ; but will penetrate our very bones, our marrow, and even the very principle of our life and being. “ *Pones eos ut clibanum ignis,*” *Psalm xx.* “ Thou wilt place them as a furnace of fire,” says the prophet. Every one that is damned will be like a lighted furnace, which has its own flames in itself ; all that filthy blood will boil in the veins, the brains in the skull, the heart in the breast, the bowels within that unfortunate body, surrounded with an abyss of fire, out of which it cannot escape. “ *Quis poterit habitare de vobis cum igne devorante,* *Isa. xxxiii.* “ Who of you will be able to live in a devouring fire,” says the prophet Isaiah, “ a fire that will turn you into itself, and make of you a living flame?” Let us answer, but let us first seriously think on it.

ITS INTENSENESS.

III. CONSIDER, that whatever has been said either to the strength, the quality, or the quantity of this infernal fire, it is nothing in comparison to the intenseness it will have, as being the instrument of the divine justice, which will raise it above its natural

force to produce most wonderful effects. “*Descendit ignis a Deo de cælo,*” *Apoc. x.* The infernal fire will be of that kind; it will have its rise from the foot of the throne of God, that is to say, it will receive an incredible vigour from the omnipotency of God; working, not with its own activity, but, as an instrument, with the activity of its agent; who will give to the flames such intenseness as he shall think convenient to revenge the outrages committed against him, and to repair the injuries done his glory. “*Creatura enim tibi Factori deserviens exardescit in tormentum adversus injustos,*” *Sap. xvi. 24.* “The creature serving thee the Creator, is lighted up into torment against the wicked.”

If the fire, like a sword, falling with its own weight only, makes such havock amongst us, what will it do in hell, when assisted by an omnipotent arm? “*Si acuero ut fulgur gladium meum,*” *Deut. xxxii. 41.* “If I shall whet my sword as the lightning.” So that this fire, though corporeal, will not only burn the body, but the soul also; for as God makes use of material water in baptism, not only to wash the body, but to cleanse and sanctify the soul,

so in hell he makes use of fire, though material, to punish her when sinful and unclean. The infernal fire, then, is an effect of the omnipotency of God injured by sinners ; it is a visible sign of that infinite hatred which the divine goodness bears to sin, as also an invention of his wisdom to recover the honour taken from him by the wicked ; who, therefore, will be able to tell me to what degree those torments will amount, to be a blow proportionable to the arm of the Most High, and an invention worthy of his mind ? “ Quis novit potestatem iræ tuæ,” *Ps. xcix.* “ Who knows the power of thy anger ? ” Not being able to conceive this, as being above the capacity of our nature, how shall we be able to explicate it ? “ Miserere animæ tuæ,” *Eccl. xxx. 22.* “ Have mercy then of thy soul,” and if thou hast no care of thy soul, have compassion, at least, of thy body, for which thou art at all times so solicitous. Consider how dear those forbidden pleasures are to cost, which thou grantest thy body in contempt of the law of God. Behold that eternal furnace is already lighted up, and the breath of the anger of God is continually blowing it to increase, if possible, the violence of its flames : there are many there

already for less faults than thine ; we ought no longer then to add new matter to this fire by new sins, but by penance and tears to endeavour to put it out. "Tempus flendi," *Eccl.* iii. "This is the time of crying." "Væ vobis qui ridetis quia lugebitis et flebitis," *Luc.* vi. 25. "Woe be to you that laugh, for you shall cry and lament!"

A PRAYER

TO THE ETERNAL WORD TO FREE US FROM HELL.

O SON of God, who out of compassion of our evils became the Son of Man ; behold here that strayed sheep, which thou, as a good shepherd, soughtest with so much pain, and redeemest with so much blood : canst thou permit it to be lost, and take no care of it ? O Lord, no, but rather place it on thy shoulders, and show to all heaven the fruit of thy labours, and the price of thy divine life. If thou savest me, all the blessed will rejoice, and the angels will praise thee for it ; and I with them will for ever sing thy mercies. Have, therefore, O Lord, pity on me, "Libera me de ore leonis," and

free my soul from the jaws of this infernal lion, who out of spite to thee would devour me. It is true I have not had the respect for thee as I ought, so often preferring my brutal fancies to thy divine will ; but I am sorry for it from my heart ; I annul, retract, and detest, all I have done against thee, because thou art my chiefest good, and because I love thee, and will continue to love thee above all things, as thy infinite perfection deserves ; desiring at the same time a greater sorrow than I have, to restore by this act the glory I have deprived thee of by my sins. Let that mercy, which, whilst I sinned, did so graciously move thee to suspend the punishment, excite thee at present to pardon me entirely, since I humble myself before thee. I take this soul, "in manus tuas Domine commendo spiritum meum," "and put her again into thy divine hands." I appeal from the tribunal of an injured God, by which I deserved to fall, to that of a God, who was crucified, and died for me, let that judge me, let that sign the sentence ; where thou hast with so much love written my salvation, there will I remain to enjoy the fruit thereof for ever. Amen.

THE THIRD
CONSIDERATION:
FOR TUESDAY.

THE COMPANY
OF THE DAMNED.

I. CONSIDER, what great torment will be added to the infernal habitation by the inhabitants themselves. The being in ill company is so great a pain, that one would think the very plants on earth are sensible of it, whilst they withdraw themselves, and fly those that are noxious or hurtful to them. It is most certain that the Holy Ghost assures us, “ *Melius est habitare in terra deserta, quam cum muliere rixosa, et iracunda,*” *Prov. xxi. 19.* “ It is better to live in a desert land, than with a scolding and angry woman.” A poor husband, that is accustomed to hear nothing but lamenting and brawling at home, can scarce resolve to

return thither at night, and every hour seems to him a thousand, till he is got out again. Judge, then, what it will be to live for ever in company of the damned: when the being only with one of them, I will not say in hell, but in a terrestrial paradise, would be a torment not to be borne. As in heaven they are full of charity, and love each other as themselves, so in hell it will be quite contrary; they will all be filled with hatred, wishing each other all evil, full of enmity, not to be reconciled for a whole eternity. All laws being overturned, and all reason banished, there will be no regard had to consanguinity, parentage, country, or to any tie, or motive which might mitigate their desperate rage against one another. “*Spinæ congregatæ igne comburentur,*” *Isa. xxxiii.* “The thorns gathered together shall be burnt by fire.” They will be like thorns, always pricking and tearing one another in pieces. In what passion do we now and then behold some sick people, when not served according to their mind? What a fury is that gouty person in, when handled a little rougher than ordinary! And yet this is but a shadow of the despair of those wretches which

will prove so tormenting to themselves and others. Their very howling and groans will make them intolerable. A mother cannot endure to hear her child cry the whole night; and though she loves it, yet oftentimes is so transported with anger, as to curse it. But what curses, and what furies will those of the damned, be amongst so many tears and lamentations, not of a beloved child, but of a numberless crowd of enemies; not of a night of some few hours, but of a night that will last for ever! And shall there be any one among christians who can think to find some relief in that gulf of torments, by not being there alone? O fools! O madmen! Shall not the furnace increase in heat in proportion to the fuel that is thrown into it? "Ex damnatorum multitudine pæna singulorum augetur," in 4 *dist.* 50. *q.* 2. *a.* "The pain of every particular," says St. Thomas, "is increased from the multitude of the damned." The more there are, the greater will be their torment, which will increase by reflection from one to the other, aggravating each other's pain, and redoubling each other's misery. To a poor body in torment, sometimes the sight of his very friends is a trou-

ble, and the very words that are spoken to comfort him, give him a disturbance; and shall you expect any ease from the company and sight of your sworn enemies?

OF THE DEVILS.

II. CONSIDER, the company of the devils will prove far more tormenting than would be that of our greatest enemies, they being also executioners and ministers of the divine justice. They will afflict the damned two different ways, by their sight and by reproaches. The sight of a devil is so terrible that St. Francis after having seen one, assured his companion, brother Giles, "that had it not been for a particular help of God, he could not have beheld such a monster, though for never so few moments, without expiring." *Cron. p. 1. l. p. 4. Tit. 14. c. 5.* St. Antoninus, in his *Sum*, in *Dialog. tract. 1. c. 28.* makes mention of a religious person, who, having seen the devil, said, "He would freely go into a fiery furnace rather than see him any more." St. Catharine of Sienna, speaking to our Saviour, said much more: "That rather than to behold again so frightful an infernal form, she

would choose to walk in a road all of fire to the very day of judgment." * According to this, one of those monsters alone would be enough to make a hell of the place he is in ; yet in hell they will be without number. " Hostis meus terribilibus oculis me intuitus est," *Job* xvi. 10. " My enemy," says Job, in the person of a sinner, " hath beheld me with terrible eyes," fearing the very least glance of such frightful looks. But what will it be, when reproaches and scorn is added to the sight of them ? Thou art at last caught in the net, will those wicked spirits say, to every one of those poor wretches : learn to trust thyself to traitors. Fool, that deservedst always to have been chained, who couldst so easily have saved thyself by restoring those ill-gotten goods, by breaking off that lewd practice, by one hearty sorrow, and thou wouldest not do it. Why doest thou now complain ? Thou wert thyself the occasion of thy misfortune. Curse God and die ; but die so as never to end thy misery, and toil on, never to rest. The gamester who has lost all his money at play, bears nothing so impatiently as the being upbraided with his misfortunes. This puts him into rage, he tears

the cards, he foams and storms, and cares not what becomes of his life, if he can but revenge himself. The damned shall be burning with rage and anger, yet without any power of revenge. They must, in spite of them, hear all and see all, and consume themselves with pain, without any hopes of redress. However, what a life will that be, worse than a thousand deaths, to live among such cruel enemies and such bloody executioners ? The church knowing what a miserable condition it must be to be forced to live with an enemy, condescends to separate the habitation of such married people, to whom enmity and a more than ordinary hatred have made it intolerable together. O that such a compassion to live could enter this unfortunate place, that what those poor wretches suffer, they might suffer alone, and carry their hell with them into some corner of the earth, like a cage of fire only for themselves ! but they cannot hope for so much good. “ Peccator videbit et irasetur, dentibus suis fremet et tabescet.” *Ps. cxiii.* “ The sinner shall see, and shall be angry, he shall gnash his teeth and pine away.” The sinner shall behold the foulness of his tormentors, hear their injuries, shall

foam with rage, and consume himself to no end, for, "Desiderium peccatorum peribit." *Ps. cxii.* "The desire of sinners shall perish."

OF THE ACCOMPLICES IN SIN.

III. CONSIDER, that the company of the accomplices in sin will be painful above all imagination, it being but reasonable that those should become instruments of greater grief to satisfy the divine justice, who have been ministers of most criminal pleasures in offending. Without doubt, therefore, those friends, for whose sake you turned your backs to God, will be the cruelest furies of that abyss, then will be fulfilled what was threatened by Joshua, "Sint sudes in oculis vestris," *Jos. xxiii. 13*, to those who should love creatures to the prejudice of that love which is due to the Creator, that those creatures should be to them like *stakes* in their eyes, tormenting their sight and memory without the least mercy. Who can conceive what curses, what blasphemies, what execrations they will spit out, wanting nothing but the power of devouring one another? "Unusquisqui carnem brachii sui vorabit. Manassem Ephraim, et Ephraim Manassem,

simul ipsi contra Judam," *Isa.* ix. 20. "Every one shall eat the flesh of his arm. Manasses Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasses, they together against Juda." God preserve you from ever falling into that pit; as I beg it for myself, so I do for you, from my very heart: but remember, from this very time, that if ever through misfortune you should fall into it, that no devil will torment you so much as the person you disordinately loved. That face, which at present you style your heaven, will then appear ugly to you, as hell itself. Those eyes, which are now your stars, shall then send forth darts more piercing than the very lightning. Those looks, which you value as much as any treasure, will then be turned into vipers fiercer than any dragon: in one word, you will have in her all that is tormenting, a hell equal, if not worse than all hell besides; reflecting every moment for what filth you have lost the beautiful face of God; and for how small a satisfaction you have enslaved yourself to eternal misery. A great prince being taken prisoner in war, seeing himself brought before a subject of his, who then was become his rival and conqueror; "Take that man

away," said he to the standers-by, "or out of compassion to me, kill me." Ah! miserable sinner, what death wouldest thou not willingly undergo to have her taken out of thy sight, whom once, in a style rather becoming a heathen than a poet, thou calledst thy goddess? thou wouldest rejoice to be buried in a deeper pit, if it could be; think it easier to live with dragons, and look upon the company of devils far more pleasant: but there is no remedy: that fury may be cursed, may be detested, but is not to be removed: what thinkest thou then of this habitation? The punishment assigned for parricides was to be shut up in a sack with a cock, a serpent, and a monkey, and so to be thrown into the sea: but how little do the law-givers amongst men understand what pain is! the divine justice has found out other sort of company wherewith to punish criminals, a place full of executioners and condemned persons, filled with hatred and reproaches, in the middle of a sea of fire, which has neither shore nor bottom. And yet there are those, who choose it for their eternal dwelling preferable to the heavenly Jerusalem. "Lata porta, et spatiosa via est quæ dicit ad perditionem, et multi in-

trant per eam." *Matt.* vii. 13. "Wide the gate, and spacious is the way which leads to perdition, and many enter the same." They are not dragged to it by force, but go freely thither on their own accord.

A PRAYER

TO THE HOLY GHOST, TO AVOID DAMNATION.

O most Holy Spirit, who with the Father and the Son art one and the same God, I adore thee out of a real sense of my insufficiency, and most humbly acknowledge (*Sine tuo numine nihil est in homine, nihil est innoxium. Seq[ue] Missa*) that without thy help I cannot have the least good thought, for there is nothing in man, without thee, but what is defiled. How then shall I be able, without thy assistance, to overcome the greatest of all dangers, which I run on account of so many iniquities, to wit, the danger of being damned. It belongs to thee, O Lord, to support my weakness; and the glory of saving me will be thine, by triumphing over thy and my enemies. Art not thou the Spirit of comfort? Why wilt thou let me fall into eternal misery? Thou,

who art my support ; thou, who from my mother's womb tookest me for thine, by regeneration in the waters of baptism, canst thou now, forgetting my danger, be deaf to all my prayers, and suffer him to perish who relies on thee ? Let it never be so : I hope in thee, and I know I shall not be confounded, confidently expecting to praise thy mercies, in company of all the saints in heaven, though after having many times deserved to feel the rigour of thy justice among others damned in hell. And because it is not fitting I should only think of myself, I humbly beseech thy favour for all my christian brethren, and recommend to thee all sinners, as much as I do my own soul : shut up, by thy grace, the way to that abyss, that they may have no more sins to bring them to it ; enlighten their understanding, that they may be sensible of the fatal consequences of their wicked life, and give them so much strength to mend themselves, that serving thee faithfully in this life, they may deserve to enjoy thee for ever in a blessed eternity. Amen.

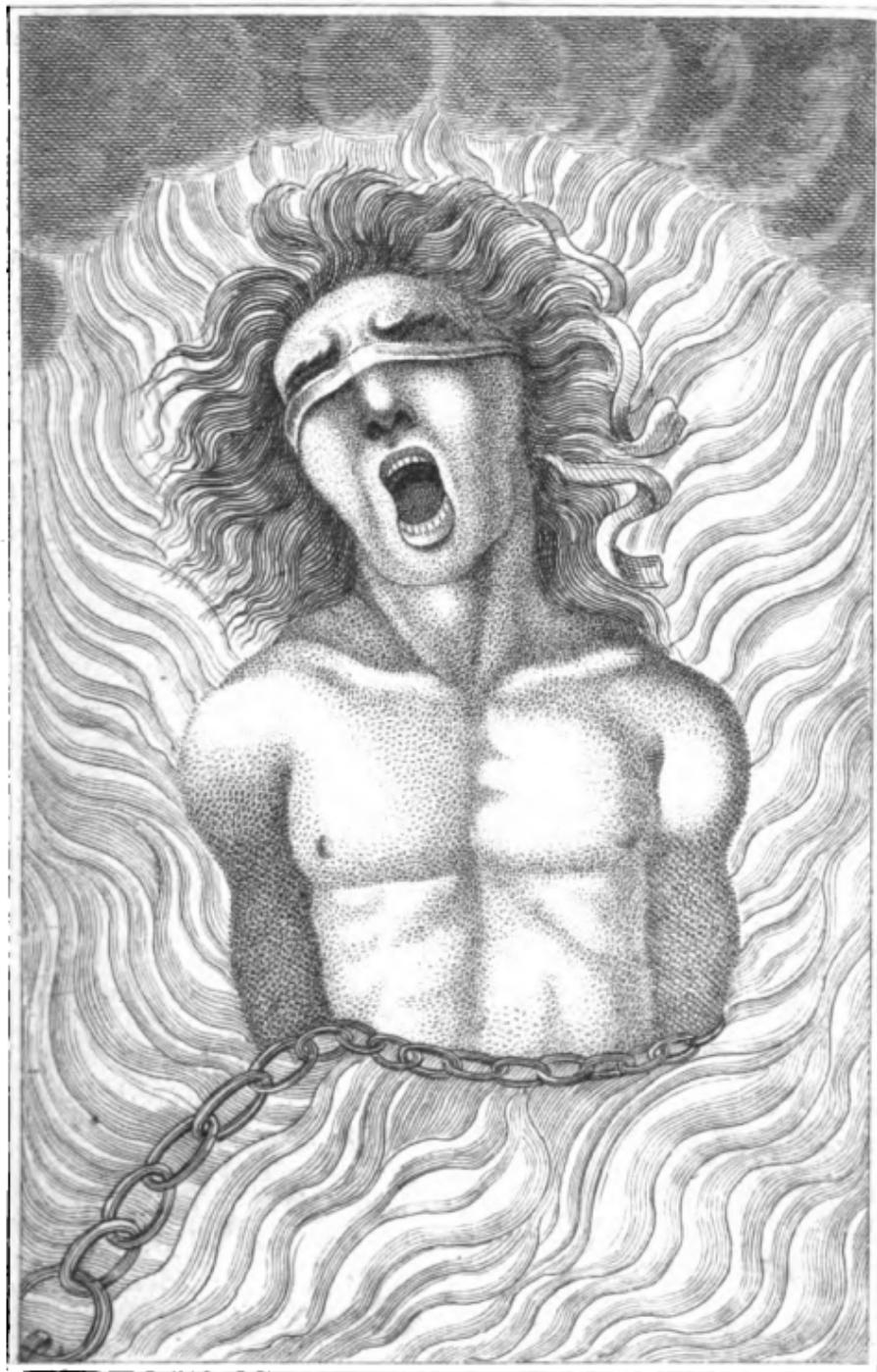
THE FOURTH
CONSIDERATION:
FOR WEDNESDAY.

THE PAIN OF LOSS.

THE LOSS IS INFINITE. *

I. CONSIDER, what great loss a soul suffers in losing of God for ever, and with him all the enjoyments which she might have hoped for in possessing him. Who can sufficiently explicate what it is to be deprived for ever of the chiefest good? We may say of this, what St. Augustine says of happiness: "Acquiri potest, aestimari non potest;" "It may be acquired, but cannot be valued." So on the contrary, the pain of loss may be felt, but cannot be explicated, neither by the damned, nor even the blessed themselves. This pain in substance is a hell of itself greater than all the rest; for, "in this," says St. Thomas, "Damnatio ultima consistit in hoc, quod intellectus hominis total-

The Pain of Loss.



I am cast away from the Sight of thine eyes.

Psal. 30. 23.

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iter Divino lumine privetur, et affectus a Dei bonitate obstinate avertatur." *Opusc.* 2. c. 174. "Damnation essentially consists, that the understanding of man be totally deprived of Divine light, and his affection obstinately turned from the goodness of God." This pain, therefore, is infinite; for if the fury of that devouring fire could be a thousand and a thousand times redoubled, it would never equal this torment: "Si mille quis ponat gehennas, nihil tale dicturus est: quale, a beatæ illius gloria honore repelli." *Homil.* 24. *in c.* 7. *Matt.* "If any one," says St. John Chrysostome, "should imagine a thousand hells, he will never thereby express what it is, to be excluded from the honour of that blessed glory." In like manner, if all the other pleasures of heaven were multiplied a thousand times over and over, they could never equal the joy of the blessed in beholding God face to face. God is not, therefore, that good which can be conceived by our weak understanding; but such a divine being, as infinitely surpasses all thought whatsoever; so the evil of losing God, is not what we can comprehend in this life, but infinitely surpassing all imagination: it is an evil annexed

to the divine vengeance of God: it is an evil, I may say, by divine appointment, in which God is concerned as supreme judge. "Est et turpum pæna Deus." *Li. 5. de Consid. c. 21.* "God is also the pain of the wicked," says St. Bernard: that is, as God is the greatest happiness of the blessed in heaven, so he will be the greatest pain of being damned in hell. Then will that dismal divorce, that eternal enmity and perpetual opposition be established between God and his creature: "Vos non populus meus, et ego non ero vester." *Os. 2.* "You shall be no longer my people, and I will not be your God." The creature shall belong no longer to God, so as to receive any comfort from him, or any ways feel the benefit of his protection: the creature will detest, blaspheme, and hate her Maker, without any power of removing herself from him; and he, in like manner, will abhor and reject her, but still be always present by his influence to torment her. O what division! O what union! both lamentable without comparison; and yet sinners do not fear! "Auctoritatis formidabile ministerium." The office of judge is styled *formidable* in law, because he can decree eight kinds of

punishment; and that God is not feared, who after having decreed innumerable torments for the wicked, makes himself also their punishment: "Quis non timebit te, O Rex gentium?" Who shall not fear thee, O King of nations!" *Jer. x. 7.*

THIS LOSS IS MOST PAINFUL.

II. CONSIDER, that sinners at present make but little account of the loss of the chiefest good; because, being accustomed to weigh all things by their senses, they have no idea of that evil, as not falling within their reach. Besides, they, taking delight in being estranged from God, do not understand what torment it can be, to be separated from him for ever: but in this, as well as in other things, they show themselves fools. Though in this life we have but a very obscure knowledge of the infinite happiness which consists in enjoying God; yet in hell the damned, for their greater torment, will have a most lively apprehension of so great a good; and knowing that it is through their fault they have lost it, they will always be consuming themselves with rage and despair. A hawk does not

stir till he sees his prey ; but having once discovered it, with what fury does he dart himself upon it, and if tied, is ready to break his jesses to make at it. In this life, the soul is kept down by the body, and continues in it as a fire under the ashes in a natural state ; but breaking loose from the body, is in a violent state, like fire lighted in a mine ; and as this is in a state of the utmost violence, so is a soul in endeavouring to get to her centre, which is God, “ *Deus Cordis mei.* ” *Ps. lxxii.* And because at the same time she is rejected by God as unworthy of him, it cannot be expressed what torment she is put to, by being forced to be out of her proper place for ever. If a bone out of joint causes such unspeakable pain, who can express the pain a body must suffer in having all its bones, above two hundred in number, put out at once ? yet this would be but a dream in comparison of that affliction, which a soul feels by being out of her centre, which is God : as much as the soul surpasses the body, so much ought her immediate griefs to surpass those of the body. If pain be the effect of separation, where the union is greater, their separation must of consequence be the more painful :

for as the inclination a soul has to God, the centre of happiness to a rational mind, is a natural and necessary tendency, by which she is carried on with all the force of her being, to be violently separated from this object, and that, for ever, must be a torment without its equal, and in a manner doubly infinite, both as to the good she is deprived of, which is divine, and as to the time it is to last, which is eternal. What, therefore, will the unfortunate sinner say at the hearing of the last dreadful sentence, “ Go from me, thou accursed, into everlasting fire,” be-gone for ever from me thy God, for to dwell for ever with thy enemies in fire. It has sometimes happened, that a mother led into captivity, and parting from her son, or one sister leaving another, has fallen down dead on the spot merely by excess of grief: what death will a soul feel, then, in parting with God for ever? it will not be such a death as puts an end to evils, but such as begins them; never to have an end.

IT IS DUE TO SIN.

III. CONSIDER, that this bitter separation, this infinite loss, is due to sin, and re-esta-

blishes in the universe what sin had destroyed. For in sin there is a double malice: the first is the turning one's back to the uncreated good, having neither regard to his divine will, nor value for his divine friendship; the other is the fixing one's eyes on a created good as the chief object and centre of one's happiness. "Duo mala fecit populus," "Two evil things has my people done," says our Lord in *Jeremy*, ii. 13. "Me derelinquerunt fontem apuæ vivæ," "They have left me, the fountain of living water." Behold here the aversion or turning from God. "Et fæderunt sibi Cisternas dissipatas," "And they have dug cisterns for themselves that do not hold water." Behold here the conversion to the creature; in these two kinds of malice consists the evil of mortal sin. Now the divine justice prepares a punishment in hell suitable to both these disorders, in punishing the conversion to the creature, by the means of creatures themselves, that is, by fire, by darkness, by stench, by imprisonment, by the devils with the pain of sense: and he punishes the aversion from God by depriving the sinner of God himself, with the pain of loss. From hence follows, that the first

malice, in abandoning the chiefest good, being incomparably greater than the second, which consists in seeking a satisfaction in forbidden objects, it is but just that the pain of loss corresponding to the first malice be incomparably greater than the pain of sense, which corresponds to the second. Besides, it follows that the aversion to God, being, as it were, an infinite injury done the Creator, the pain of loss that is due to it ought to be, as it were, an infinite misery in the rebellious and condemned creature. And because the same creature, according to her being, is not capable of so much torment as the wrong done to God, by abandoning him, deserves; the divine justice, therefore, will supply so much strength to the mind of the damned, to comprehend their loss in so lively a manner, as not to be able so much as one moment to turn their thoughts from it. “Evigilabunt in opprobrium, ut videant semper,” *Dan. xii.* “They shall awake unto reproach to see it always.” God concurring to this unhappy knowledge, by a painful light, to make them infinitely miserable, as he does by a light of glory concur with the blessed in heaven to make them eternally happy: and therein consists the

difference of pain, which sinners will feel for having lost God. Though every one that is damned will equally lose God, yet those who are guilty of more sins, will on more heads be deprived of him. To these the divine justice will give more understanding to comprehend their loss, that thereby their torment may be the greater. How foolish then must they be, who adding one sin to the other, comfort themselves with saying, it is as good to be damned for a hundred sins as for one. Unfortunate people! The Lord have mercy on you, from falling into that abyss, for at the end you would, to your own cost, find the difference. He that is damned for one sin, undergoes a hell in the pain of sense and pain of loss due to that sin ; but he that is damned for an hundred sins, suffers, as it were, an hundred hells, that is, a torment a hundred times redoubled in one and the other kind of pain ; and is, as it were, as many times damned as he has titles deserving damnation. How is it possible that we, who, if to be let blood, so easily find a difference between a lancet that is least sharp, or the surgeon's hand that is heavier than ordinary, should make no distinction between

one or more eternities of such pains, as the wisdom of an angry God could invent for those that hate him! I do not at all wonder that in more than three hundred places in holy scripture, sinners are called fools, since they so well deserve it; and if other fools are tied with ropes, these deserve to be bound in chains.

A PRAYER

TO JESUS CHRIST, TO OBTAIN TO BE SAVED.

JESUS CHRIST, my Lord, who through excess of thy infinite mercy becamest my advocate with thy heavenly Father, can I do any thing better than beg thou wouldest "Judica causam tuam," *Ps. xxxvii. 22.* "Plead thy own cause;" the cause, indeed, is mine, because thereon my eternal salvation depends; but it is thine also, for as much as it concerns thy glory; for then alone "Ipse eris Salvator meus," *Job xiii. 16.* "Thou shalt be, completely, my Saviour." It truly was an excess of infinite mercy to free me, by the price of thy most precious blood, from that abyss, whereunto my sins had led me; but what will that excess avail me, if getting out of thy hands,

I return again to cast myself into that bottomless pit of damnation ? "Quæ utilitas in sanguine tuo, dum descendō in corruptionem ?" *Ps. xxix.* 10. "What advantage in thy blood, whilst I descend into corruption ?" Thou canst hold me, and efficaciously keep me from perishing, for "In manibus tuis sortes meæ," *Ps. xxx.* 16. "In thy hands are my lots." If, then, thou resolvest to shut thy ears to my prayers, thou must also, in regard to me, change that amiable name of Jesus, so full of hope and sweetness, and cancel all the promises thou madest me of being my life. O Jesus, therefore, be unto me a Jesus, and save me. Thou hast, by thy passion, merited more good for me, than I have demerited by my sin ; it is not reasonable, then, to think my debt can go farther to condemn, than so full a payment can go to save me. O, therefore, most loving Redeemer, lay open to the Father Almighty those wounds, which, for this end, thou hast reserved in thy glorious body : demand that mercy for me, which is due to thee by all right of justice ; that being enriched with thy merits, and defended by thy protection, I may for ever enjoy with thee the fruit of thy labours. Amen.

The Sting of Conscience.



My Soul is repelled from peace. I have forgotten
good things. Thr. 3. 17.

THE FIFTH
CONSIDERATION:
FOR THURSDAY.

THE STING OF CONSCIENCE
THE MEMORY OF PAST PLEASURES.

I. CONSIDER, that as in dead bodies worms are engendered from putrefaction, so in the damned there arises a perpetual remorse from the corruption of sin, which is called the sting of conscience, because it will continually gnaw their hearts with a raging fury, without ever relenting. "Vermis eorum non moritur," *Mark ix. 44.* "Their worm dies not," says our Lord; and this he repeats three times in the same sermon, to make us to comprehend the greatness of this pain. Saints have been of opinion, that conscience, even in this life, is the greatest tormentor of sinners. "Ipse est Pæna sua quem torquet conscientia sua." *Ps. xxxviii.* "He is his own pain," says St. Augus-

tine, "whose conscience torments him." And St. Gregory says, that "Inter innumerabiles afflictionum molestias nulla est major afflictio quam conscientia delictorum," *Ps. cxliii.* "Amongst the innumerable troubles of afflictions, there is none greater than the consciousness of sin." But to speak the truth, conscience, at present, rather supplies the place of a messenger, citing the sinner before the divine tribunal, than that of an executioner to torment him. This employment being reserved for it in hell, when the soul being condemned by an irrevocable sentence, the divine Judge "trahet eam tortori," "shall deliver her over to the torturer," he will put her into the hands of this executioner, never to let her rest, so much as one moment, for a whole eternity. This worm more cruel than any asp, will make three wounds in the heart of every damned soul, which may be farther illustrated to us by the words of Innocent III. in his Book of the Contempt of the World: "Affliget memoria, sera turbabit pænitentia, torquebit Augustia," c. 1. "The memory will afflict, late repentance will trouble, and want of time will torment." It will afflict with the memory of past pleasures; with the

too late repentance for sins committed; and the want of those good occasions which they so carelessly neglected.—First of all, then, *the memory will afflict.* It is a great torment to a miserable wretch to remember his past happiness: “Quondam opulentus repente contritus sum,” *Job xvi. 13.* “I, formerly that wealthy person,” says *Job*, “am reduced on a sudden.” What will a sinner be able to say in that abyss, when he remembers, he was accustomed to make himself feared by every body, even by insulting and blaspheming God himself; and now he is so weak, that he cannot so much as stir himself one hair’s breadth from the place he is in? How much revenge did he once study, to maintain his post; and now he is trampled under foot by the devils themselves, “Vadent et venient super eum horribiles,” *Job xx. 25.* “The horrible shall go and come upon him.” And yet he is not able to resent it. He, who once gave himself over to all sorts of pleasure; whose palate was fed with the greatest dainties; whose flesh had all the ease imaginable, and wallowed in all kinds of impurity; is now to lament for ever, always suffer, and continually die with despair: “I am tortured

in this flame." O dreadful memory! O dismal change! If one could, at least, in that death drive away these racking thoughts, as we do in this life by sleep, divert them by reasoning, soften them by some new recreation ; but reflect, "Qui me comedunt, non dormiunt," *Job xxx. 17.* "They that eat me, sleep not." This worm never sleeps ; this great tribunal has no vacations. The soul will never more be able to suspend her operations, or give herself any relaxation, but must continually be applied, in spite of all her endeavours to the contrary. Who, then, can conceive what appearance those short enjoyments, forced from creatures, contrary to the command of God, will then make in the minds of the damned? The earth seen from the heavens, does not appear to be so much as a point ; what will our short life look like, when considered from the bottom, if I may so say, of an eternity? If this life seems to be no more than a flying dream to a sinner, when come to the point of death, what will it seem to him after millions and millions of ages, passed in a burning furnace, in the midst of so many pains, one hour, whereof, were sufficient to render its memory most

unfortunate? "Malitia horæ oblivionem facit luxuriæ magnæ," *Eccl.* xi. 29.

Judge what a misfortune it will be, after a great number of years, to remember a forbidden pleasure, a momentary delight, vanished like a shadow, changed into an eternal torment. Those who choose to lose their soul, rather than not answer a challenge, disappoint some criminal engagement, break off some lewd practice, pardon an injury, or not do an ill thing for the keeping up of a family, what will they say, when through that darkness they shall behold the memory of that family to be quite extinct: that woman so much doated on devoured by worms, their houses reduced to ashes, their lands and country consumed with the flames of the last day? It would be an insufferable torment to pass one whole night in fire, though it were on condition to live a thousand years in all manner of pleasure. What, then, will it be, to have chosen to despair for an eternity in an abyss of all evils, on condition to have drunk some few draughts of poisonous delight? "Gustans gustavi paululum mellis et ecce morior," 1 *Reg.* xiv. 43. "Tasting, I tasted a little honey, and

behold I die." O death without end ! O madness never to be equalled !

SORROW FOR SINS COMMITTED.

II. CONSIDER, the second wound of this devouring worm will be, a late and fruitless sorrow for sins committed. "Sera turbabit pænitentia," "Late repentance will trouble them." Sin, in this world, to the wicked, seems no more than an evil, to be laughed at. "Quasi per risum stultus operatur scelus," *Prov. x. 23.* "The fool commits sin and laughs at it." They apprehend no other evil in it than an innocent deformity; and, therefore, sometimes grow proud of it, as if the spots of the soul were as ornamental to her as they are to marble. But assure yourself, that in hell they will soon change their opinion, where the monstrous sight of one mortal sin will cause a more unspeakable heart-breaking than the sight of all the other monsters of hell besides. The blessed Catharine of Genoa, (*In vit, Cap. xx.*) having been very much enlightened by Almighty God concerning this truth, used to beg of him, that in the hour of her death he would show her all the devils in hell, as

ugly as they are, rather than be showed the foulness of the least act against his divine will. Imagine, therefore, what pain it must be, to behold for ever the abominations of so many crimes, as they are in themselves. I said, *to behold for ever*, because the divine justice will fix the understanding of those miserable wretches, continually to think on the sin they have committed, and their will to detest it, without any power of turning their thoughts from it. “*Justo Dei judicio omnia peccata memorantur, et de omnibus continue torquentur.*” *In 4 dist. 50. quæst. ult.* “By a just judgment of God,” says St. Bonaventure, “all their sins are remembered, and they are continually tortured by every one of them.” The invention which that husband found out to punish the infidelity of his wife, was both most cruel and barbarous, when having, with his own hand, cut the throat of the adulterer, he hung up the body in a room in which he had locked up his wife, to be killed, as it happened, by the sight and stench of that carcass: but consider how much more properly will the divine justice revenge itself, whose intentions are regulated by an infinite rectitude, and an equal wisdom. Before the eyes of

the damned will be set forth a detail of their crimes, that they may perpetually contemplate their sin, and always keep up the knowledge and memory of their infidelity. "Statuam contra faciem tuam," *Ps. xlix.* "I will place before thy face the things thou hast done." "Non ut corrigas, sed ut erubascas," *Aug. Ibid.* "Not to correct them," says St. Augustine, "but to make thee blush." He says, moreover, that they will behold their abominations as they are in themselves, because God will impart to them the knowledge he has of sin, so that it will appear to them as it does to God, that is, an abyss of deformity and malice, and not as it does at present, an evil not to be regarded. "Tunc confusio respeciet aestimationem Dei," *q. 87. Supl. a. 2. ad. 4.* "The confusion then," says St. Thomas, "will be proportioned to the estimate God has of sin." So those wretches, considering on one side the rule of all goodness, which is the divine will, and on the other, the inflexible opposition which they have to this rule, find in this opposition their chiefest misery. "Posuisti me contrarium tibi et factus sum mihi metipsi gravis." *Job vii. 20.* "Thou hast placed me (says Job) against thee, and

I am become burthensome to myself." And though they shall deplore their sins for ever, yet they shall never come to any composition with God, because, what pleases God, will always displease them, which is their pain; and what displeases God, will always please them, which is their sin. "Nunquam recto pravoque conveniet, haec enim sibi invicem adversantur," *l. 5. de consid. c. 12.* "He can never," says St. Bernard, "agree to what is good and to what is evil, they being contrary to one another." O what a miserable state must this be, to be acquainted with the infinite malignity of sin, and yet always to give it admittance! to be for ever in a state of wickedness, and to be still increasing it! "Superbia eorum qui te oderunt ascendit semper," *Ps. lxxii.* "The pride of those that hate thee is always growing." It is to this eternal and fruitless sorrow, O sinners, that your iniquity leads you; and yet, nevertheless, instead of disengaging yourself by penance, you rather entangle yourselves more and more by new crimes! I have not words capable of expressing so insensible a folly, that a man should, with so much caution, avoid little insignificant evils,

and, at the same time, go in search after such horrible dangers. Do we, then, change our nature when the business of eternity and our salvation is to be acted? Where can the devils have found so powerful a charm, which deprives sinners of their very reason? Let every one, then, have their last end in view, and not look upon that short and momentary pleasure which is found in sin, but that eternal sorrow which will for ever attend it in hell.

GOOD OCCASIONS NEGLECTED.

III. CONSIDER the third wound which this sting of conscience causes in the damned. It is an infinite grief for having neglected so many fair occasions of saving themselves, and now to find there is not one more left, "Juravit per viventem in secula saeculorum, quia tempus non erit amplius," *Apoc. x. 6.* for it is already decreed and confirmed by oath of Him "that lives for ever and ever, that time shall be no more," to remedy this past neglect. It is what with the greatest despair forces from the hearts of these miserable creatures a most uncomfortable complaint—"Time shall be no

more." *Drexelius de damnat. rago. c. 3.* God having permitted a holy religious man to hear the sighs of one of these poor wretches, which were enough to soften the very stones, being asked by the religious who he was, "I am a damned soul," said he, "and I lament with my companions, above all other misery, the time lost, never to return." O time, then, which is so precious, and yet so ill employed in plays. in conversations, in amours, in pleasures, in sin ; thou wilt be that most cruel viper which will gnaw our hearts, if we poor creatures should chance to mortify our body ? If eternity could have an end, we should be content to pass one whole one, still in greater torment, to obtain this half hour of repentance ; yet that will then be impossible which before had been so easy. "Time shall be no more." The having not lost by accident, but voluntarily thrown away so great a treasure, without any hopes of regaining it, will make those unfortunate souls, with an hellish fury, to curse sometimes God, whom they hate, as their enemy ; sometimes the devils, whom they abhor, as traitors ; sometimes their companions, who enticed them to sin ; and sometimes their

own selves, before all others, for having been so mad as to throw themselves, of their own accord, into that abyss of pain. Ah ! what a fool was I, will each of them say, to have incurred an eternity of torment for one moment of filthy pleasure ! Was not I told of it by my ghostly fathers ? Did not pious books repeat this to me ? Was not I assured by faith, that the end of sin was damnation ? And I, accursed wretch as I was, would not open my eyes for my own good, but resolved to damn myself in spite of all ! There was a time, when God called me by so many inspirations, begged of me by so many voices, allured me by so many promises, deterred me by so many threats, and I was deaf to all : now I beg, now I rage and despair, and after having spent a sea of tears, I shall never compass what once was in my power to have obtained with one only tear : and God, who once was so compassionate of my miseries, as to deplore them himself, will now become inexorable. If death, at least, could be found in this place, to put an end to so many evils ! Death will be there, but not such as those miserable wretches desire ; not to refresh, but to torment them, “ *Occidente pæna, vivificante*

sententia," *Eus. in hom ad mōn.* "by a killing pain and vivifying sentence." Nothing else will remain to them but to bite their tongues, these being all they will have in their power: "Commanducaverunt linguas suas præ dolore." *Apoc. xvi. 10.* "And they did eat their tongues for pain." (Berosus l. 1.) Some servants of God, before the Deluge, denouncing to sinners this punishment which God designed them, took care to have this prediction of theirs cut in marble, to make them have a more lively apprehension of it; and yet they were not believed till the cataracts of heaven were opened upon them, and they themselves were actually drowning. I denounce, to all who continue in sin, a deluge of fire, and that for ever, an everlasting tempest of all evils; I do not engrave this declaration on marble, but on these few leaves. God grant I may be believed, before the time is over for avoiding the punishment!

A PRAYER

TO THE ANGEL GUARDIAN, TO IMPOSE HIS
HELP TO AVOID HELL.

O HOLY angel, into whose hands, by a singular providence of God, I was consigned from the moment I was born, when shall I ever sufficiently thank thee for having freed me from hell, as often as thou hast preserved me from dying in sin ! How many more iniquities should I have committed, had it not been for thy inspirations ! And how often in those very iniquities would the devil have snatched me away as a vile slave of his, hadst not thou, my protector, always watchful over my good, assisted me with thy charity, and stopped the divine justice from delivering me over into his hands ! My wicked life, and the foulness of my sins, have often driven thee from me ; yet thou wouldst not abandon this putrified carcass, but, with an incomparable patience, didst solicit me to amend my life, that I might one day be thy companion in heaven. If that be my lot, I promise thee I will thank thee then for ever, which I now begin to do from my very heart : yet, nevertheless, O

guide of my life, and my guard in this pilgrimage, complete thy work, bring me into that blessed country, and deliver me from this cruel enemy, who, night and day, lies in wait to devour me ! I conjure thee, by all those obligations thou art indebted to the divine goodness for, in not permitting thee to fall with the wicked angels, but keeping thee firm with the chosen ones, to keep me also constant to my duty, procure me courage and strength. Call to thy and my aid the prince of the heavenly hosts, St. Michael, to precipitate again into the abyss, this rebellious devil, that makes war against me. Call all the holy angels thy companions, to my assistance ; for all I have is at stake ; the glory of God is concerned ; a soul entrusted to thee is to be saved ; I am to satisfy my Redeemer, who has so much love for me as to be ready to suffer again to save me. I am resolved for my part never to leave thy direction, but always to depend on thee ; hoping, by these means, to escape being damned, and to come to enjoy and praise God with thee for all ages. Amen.

THE SIXTH
CONSIDERATION:
FOR FRIDAY.

DESPAIR

ON ACCOUNT OF THE EXTENSION OF THE
PAINS OF HELL.

I. CONSIDER, that man, in this life, though he be capable of many evils, he is not capable of them all at once; because, here one evil corrects the other, and one poison oftentimes drives out another; but in hell it will be quite contrary; for pains there will lend each other a fresh sting, and the damned will be like so many "Vasa iræ," *Rom. ix.* "Vessels as full as they can be of the anger of God." And as in heaven, every thing will be a subject of joy; so, in that abyss, "every thing," says St. Thomas, in *4 Dist. 50. q. 2, a. 2,* "will be a subject of sorrow;" there will be nothing wanting of all that can render a

Despair.



My end is perished & my hope from our Lord.
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Thru. 3. 28.

soul most unhappy ; that the misery of the wicked may be, on all sides, complete, as the happiness of saints is complete in heaven. God for that end having gathered together all manner of pains, as it were, in one bundle, to load them on the shoulders of those unfortunate rebels, he will empty the arsenal of his justice, of all its darts, to strike them on all sides, that there may be no place in them without its wound. “*Congregabo super eos mala, et sagittas meas complebo in eis,*” “I will heap evils upon them, and mine arrows I will spend in them,” *Deut. xxxii. 23.* The fire alone would have been sufficient to render them most unfortunate, for in that alone the damned would have had incomparably more grief, than from all the butcheries, which men, or the devils, could have ever invented, that being the invention of God himself: “*Præparata est enim Tophet a rege præparata, profunda et dilatata nutrimenta ejus ignis et flatus Domini sicut torrens sulphuris succendens eam,*” *Isa. xxx. 33.* “Topheth is prepared—by the King, deep and wide, the nourishments thereof fire and much wood ; the breath of our Lord as a torrent of brimstone kindling it.”

And yet, their wickedness deserves still more; and as they had made an ill use of all their senses and powers, for to sin, so they deserved, in every one of their senses and powers, to be punished with so many pains, as made the prophet think them without number: “*Quis poterit præ timore iram tuam dinumerare?*” *Ps. xcix.* “Who can for fear reckon thy anger?” Moreover, what has been hitherto considered, was in relation to the external senses; but as the internal powers are more perfect, so they are more capable of pain, and therefore will be the more tormented. The fancy will always be afflicted with frightful imaginations; and if, through melancholy, some people are night and day in torment, caused by the dismal representations that are always before them, what will it be, when all evils conspire together, when a damned soul beholds that above her, heaven is shut; under her, nothing but unquenchable flames; round her, devils not to be bore with; and within herself, such pains as can have no relief; the sensitive appetite will, like the ebbing and flowing of the sea, be continually swelling and falling, or rather always sinking into agonies, into rage and

anguish, exposed to all the blows of divine justice, without ever being able to avoid any one of them. O God! if one drop of water falling continually wastes the stone it falls on, what will that eternal deluge of evils, mustered together to revenge the injuries done to God, cause on the hearts of those miserable wretches, when God shall “Rain down his battle upon them.” “Plu-
et super illum bellum suum,” *Job* xx. 23. Their understanding will be filled with in-
terior darkness, more terrible than the ex-
terior, which fills their prison; and of all
they ever knew they will only remember
such things as will serve to afflict them.
“Nec scientia erit apud inferos,” *Eccl.* ix.
“There will be no knowledge in hell.” A
famous doctor of Paris appearing to the
bishop, confessed, he had no other knowledge
in hell than that of his being damned, and
never to have any ease. Their will will be
obstinate in malice, without being able,
during the whole endless space of eternal
years, to have the least inclination to good,
but continually adding malice to malice;
and the more it is depressed by God, the
more it will rise against him, by hatred and
pride, and thus makes it misery eternal;

for, as St. Bernard observes, “Quid tam pœnale, quam semper velle quod nunquam erit, et semper nolle quam nunquam non erit.” *Lib. de Consid. c. 2.* “What can be so painful, as continually to desire what will never be, and wish that may not be, which can never but be.” He will always be desiring either pleasures or revenge; and never will be able to obtain his desire. He will always hate justice and the punishment, yet will never be able to fly the pain: “In æternum non obtinebit quod vult, et quod non vult in æternum nihilominus sustinebit,” *Ibid.* “He will never be able to obtain what he would have, and yet he must for ever endure what he would not have.” If the poor wretch could humble himself under the powerful hand of God, kissing the hand that so justly punishes him, it would be a mitigation to his sufferings, as it is to those blessed souls condemned to purgatory; but he, on the contrary, grows still more furious, and, like unto a toad, which, when struck at, redoubles his poison with his rage, is continually spitting his venom at the divine decrees, but still in vain; for he would gladly avoid the pain, without abhorring the fault: and because all the

passions are let loose, and without any bridle, they all combine together with the soul, to assault the providence of God, and are always repulsed with infinite heart-breaking : “ *Nunquam recto pravoque conveniet.*” *Ber.* l. 1. “ Right and wrong can never agree.” What despair must that be of those unfortunate creatures, in a perpetual thwarting of all their desires, when they shall see, that, in all ages, after so many pains, God will not afford them so much as one drop of water to refresh them? Behold, this is the end, to which the false hope of sinners leads them ; it is the greatest rashness to be always doing evil, and yet hope for good ; to continue even till death in sin, yet expect eternal salvation for reward ; to wound our Saviour anew by their repeated sins, yet to expect those wounds should always run with mercy, as the tree through its wounds distils its balsam. “ *Fili, non semines mala in sulcis injustitiæ, et non metes ea in septuplum.*” *Eccl. vii. 3.* “ My son, sow not evils in the furrows of unrighteousness, and thou shalt not reap them sevenfold.” This is the counsel which the divine goodness gives thee. Sow not sins, that thou mayest not reap multiplied pains, as the fruit of

them. Learn, therefore, to make a right use of it ; for the hope which increases sin, ends in despair.

ON ACCOUNT OF THE INTENSENESS.

II. CONSIDER, it was not without reason that unfortunate rich man called hell, “ *Locum tormentorum*,” *Luc. xvi. 28.* “ The place of torments ;” for it is the centre of all evils : and as all things are found to be much stronger in their centre than elsewhere, having all their qualities in the last degree and intensesness, so the evils that are in hell, will not only be many without number, but intense without comparison, and pure without mixture. Pains, in this place, will have no contraries to temper and soften them ; but will be altogether pain without comfort, as in heaven all the joys will be without sadness. Moreover, things that are otherwise good in themselves, in this place become bad. Company, which elsewhere is a comfort to the afflicted, will here be their greatest trouble : the light, which, in other places, is so much coveted, will be hated here, more than darkness itself. Knowledge, which in this world

does so much delight, will be there more tormenting than ignorance; so that death, which is the last of all terrors, will, in that disorder of all things, become the chiefest of all their wishes. In this present life our sorrows are either not long or not great; because nature either overcomes them by habits, or puts an end to them by falling herself under their weight." "Brevis morbis alterutrum faciet, aut extinguetur aut extinguet," *Senec. Ep. 78.* "A short disease," says Seneca, "must either kill or be killed." But in hell the rules are quite contrary, for the pains there will always continue in the same state; intolerable as to intension, and endless as to duration; neither making their pains lighter by time, or consuming the sufferers, for, "in inferno nulla est redemptio," "in hell there is no redemption." As there is nothing moderate in the torments, so there is no rest in the tormented, who are continually kept, not barely alive, but in their full senses, to have greater feeling of their misery, from which they cannot so much as for one moment depart. "Ut urantur et sentiant usque in sempiternum." *Judith xvi. 21.* "For he will give fire and worms into their flesh,

that they may be burnt and may feel for ever." It is what the divine majesty, injured by sinners, requires; it is what the blood of Christ, that is trampled upon, demands; it is what heaven itself, despised and postponed to filth and corruption, would have. The divine justice, to whom it belongs to keep up the honour and credit of God, undertakes to revenge these wrongs, and make him known for what he is. "Cognoscetur Dominus judicia faciens."

Ps. ix. 17. "The Lord shall be known doing judgments." So that those wretches, who so little have known God, and who are never to see him, shall know him by the weight of those stripes, with which they are laden: and as it were sensibly behold him, in the wounds which he makes in their souls. Thou mayest therefore believe, that, if the pains of one only of those unfortunate souls were divided among all mankind here in earth, what would come to every one's share, would kill them with more torment, than any criminal has ever suffered. Imagine, then, what despair that soul will be in, that finds herself, through her own fault, buried in such excessive pains. If it should happen to some noble lord, that was

tenderly educated, to have, as a punishment of his disorders, some little stone or gravel breed within him; he cannot so much as bear those little prickings, but tumbles, and tosses, and twines about in his bed, like any snake; he foams, curses his fate, and is tired with the very things which are ordered for his relief: and yet his bed is of down, his chamber agreeable, his friends are giving him all the consolation they can; the physicians strengthen him with hopes, and ease him with remedies; his wife serves him with love, the whole family is busy night and day, to procure him some relief; and yet all that he suffers, is but a small matter, and in one little part of his body, being in good health as to all the rest. But what will it be when this same person, when condemned, will see himself buried in an abyss of fire, of darkness, of stench, struck in all parts of his body and soul, with all kinds of evil; "Omnis dolor irruet super eum," *Job xx. 21.* "And all sorrow shall fall upon him." And there in the midst of the curses of detestable companions, in the midst of the blows and insultings of the devils, in the midst of the groans of so many condemned persons, without rest, without comfort,

without hope, he will be forced every moment, to die, as it were, a thousand deaths. Not to believe this truth after so many arguments from faith, is one of the greatest follies. What folly, then, must they be guilty of, who believe all these things, yet live in sin, no farther from that abyss, than a dead man is from his grave, it being no less due for a sinner to be buried in that abyss, than it is for a dead body to be thrown into a grave. It is a strange thing our malice should have forced a God so good, to build a place, so full of torments, to make himself obeyed and beloved by sinners: but what is more strange, is, that though he has built one, he is neither beloved nor obeyed.

ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR STATE COMPARED WITH
THAT OF GLORY.

III. CONSIDER, that to complete the despair of the damned, they will consider the glory of the saints in heaven. “Elevans oculos suos, cum esset in tormentis, vidit Abraham a longe et Lazarum in sinu ejus.” *Luc. xvi. 23.* “And lifting up his eyes, when he was in torments, he saw Abraham

afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom." This sight by a cruel opposition will quicken the torments of these poor wretches, who will equally hate their own misery and others' felicity; for though they will never see God, nevertheless, for their greater punishment, they will have a lively idea imprinted in their mind, representing to them how great a good it is to possess him for ever: and this same knowledge will be very much increased in the day of judgment, when they shall see the glorious humanity of Jesus Christ, which sight will be most terrible to them, for beholding in that the greatest of the works of God, they will be better able to comprehend the greatness of the divine majesty, and, by consequence, the happiness of the saints who will enjoy him for ever. S. Thomas *quodlib. 8. quæst.*

7, n. 17: On the other side, envy, like the rest of the vices of the mind, will reign in the damned in the highest degree, and this will create, as it were, a new hell in the breast of these unfortunate souls; "Dura ut infernus æmulatio," *Cantic. viii. 6.* "Jealousy is hated as hell." For it turns to their torments, the very happiness of the blessed, making them to desire, with an

excess of rage, to have them as companions of their pains. The Jews could not bear without envy to behold St. Stephen gain the victory over them in the dispute, "Dissecabant cordibus suis, et stridebant dentibus in eum." *Acts* vii. 54. "They, therefore, were cut to the heart, and they gnashed their teeth at him." You may well imagine, then, what rage the wicked will be in, when they remember the unspeakable triumph of the elect. If truly this pain had not been one of the greatest, we should not so often have been told it in holy scripture, which endeavours thereby to fright us into our duty. St. John says, in the Apocalypse, "Cruciabitur igne et sulphure in conspectu angelorum sanctorum, et ante conspectum agni," *Apoc.* xiv. "The wicked shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the sight of the holy angels, and in the sight of the Lamb." St. Paul affirms that, "Qui non obedient evangelio Domini nostri Jesu Christi qui pœnas dabunt in interitu æternas a facie Domini," 2 *ad Thess.* i. 8. "Those who obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall suffer eternal pains in destruction from the face of our Lord." It is before the face of the om-

nipotent God, that they shall pay for their rashness by eternal punishment; this will be doubly verified whilst the saints will behold the pain of the wicked in the divinity as in a looking-glass; and the wicked by their own misery will be sensible of the glory of the saints, as a sick man knows best the value of health, by his own misfortunes. The prophet Isaiah declares, that one of the cruellest torments sinners are to suffer, will be from hunger, thirst, and sadness, whilst at the very same time, the blessed shall be filled wth an eternal satiety of pleasures, and continually rejoice with an excess of gladness. “Faciebatis malum in oculis meis et quæ nolui elegistis. Propter hoc hæc dicit Dominus Deus: ecce servi mei comedent et vos esurietis: ecce servi mei lætabantur, et vos confundemini: ecce servi laudabunt præ exultatione cordis, et vos clamabitis præ dolore cordis et præ contritione spiritus ullabitis.” *Is. lxv. 13, 14.* “You did evil in mine eyes; and you have chosen the things that I would not. For this cause, thus saith our Lord God, Behold my servants shall drink, and you shall be thirsty. Behold my servants shall rejoice, and you shall be confounded.

Behold my servants shall praise for joyfulness of heart, and you shall cry for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit." Especially whilst they reflect that the saints are enjoying immense pleasures, whilst they, at the same time, undergo infinite martyrdoms: they will know that God and his saints rejoice at their pains, on account of the glory, which redounds to the divine justice, in the condemnation of sinners. O what a wound must this make in the heart of those miserable creatures! To be obliged to suffer so many torments for ever, and in the presence of their judge, and of their greatest enemies, the saints; to be forced to suffer this to the increase of their felicity, as a victim of a perpetual sacrifice, consumed, without being destroyed, in the honour of the Most High. And yet so it is: if I, unfortunate, should be damned, and thou, O reader, should be saved, thou wilt, for ever, rejoice at my torments, and I always repine at thy joy: and on the contrary, if I should be saved, and thou lost, I shall laugh at thy destruction, not, as it is an evil to thee, but because it is a good to God, revenging the outrages committed against him. "Lætabitur justus cum viderit vindictam; manus

sua lavabit in sanguine peccatoris." "The just man shall rejoice when he shall see revenge: he shall wash his hands in the blood of a sinner." *Ps. lvii. 11.* What despair, then, must that be, not only to have no relief amidst so many evils, but, by their pain, to increase the felicity of their mortal enemies? The impious Julian, the apostate, being struck by an invisible hand, took an handful of his blood, and threw it up towards heaven, blasphemously crying out, "Fill thyself, O Nazarene, for thou hast overcome." What, then, will be the blasphemies, the curses, the hatred, against God, and against each of the blessed, who does not only wound, but triumphs, and, as it were, receives new lustre from the unworthy blood of these rebels? If, after all, there were to be but one in every town, even in a hundred years, that should fall into this abyss, to groan amongst that desperate crowd, ought not this to fright us every one, so great is the misfortune of being damned? And we know that so many fall into it every day: "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to perdition," "multi sunt qui intrant per eam." *Mat. vii.* "and many there be that enter by it." And we

continue, without any concern, to live in sin; that is, we venture to walk in a road, at the end whereof lies that dismal precipice! Unhappy that father who begot one of these monsters to be damned! Unfortunate that mother who gave suck to one that has thus miscarried! O graceless marriage, which brought into the world an eternal enemy to God! But how much more unhappy, more unfortunate, and more graceless art thou, who choosest to undergo the trial of these pains, than believe them: "Væ quibus prius experienda sunt ista quam credenda." *Euseb. Emiss. Hom. 1. ad Monarch.* Woe to those who first experience these things before they believe them!

A PRAYER

TO OUR HOLY PATRONS, TO OBTAIN FOR US THE
GRACE TO BE SAVED.

O my holy protectors, chosen by me amongst all the other saints, upon account of the great confidence which I have in your intercession, ye have no longer any cause fearing, being already arrived safe in the

barbour, but, through your unspeakable charity, are only solicitous for me, whom ye behold still floating in so much danger of losing myself for ever: and ye have reason of being solicitous, since, before your own eyes, I have voluntarily been shipwrecked, as often as I have sinned. And where should I at present be, if the merciful hand of our Lord had not kept me from sinking? and if ye, so careful of my salvation, had not obtained for me time for repentance and amendment? I tremble at the thought, and yet I understand it so little. But what must ye say of it, who, with a perfect understanding, measure the depth of that infernal abyss, which was ready to swallow me up? I give you as many thanks as that life has moments, which, by your prayers, is granted me to repent in. Moreover, I beseech you, by the unspeakable goodness of our Lord, who, from all eternity, chose ye for his friends, and for heirs of his heavenly kingdom, be not tired with my iniquities, but overcome my hardness by the efficacy of your prayers, and obtain me a full pardon of my past sins, and the grace of dying rather than to commit the same again. Upon this hope I choose ye this day, as wit-

nesses of the peace, which I intend to establish and settle with Almighty God for ever: protesting before ye, that I abhor from my heart the horrible ingratitude and diabolical temerity with which I have so grievously offended him; declaring, that, were I to offend him again, I would rather choose to be turned into nothing, than do him so great a wrong. Ye, therefore, who are at present witnesses of this resolution of mine, continue to be advocates and intercessors, obtaining for me strength to overcome, by your example, my enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, and hereafter to triumph with ye for ever in heaven. Amen.

THE SEVENTH
CONSIDERATION:
FOR SATURDAY.

THE ETERNITY OF PAIN.
IT IS ENDLESS.

I. CONSIDER, that were the pains of hell less racking, yet, being never to have an

Eternity of Pain.



My Sorrow is made perpetual & my desperate
plague refuseth to be cured. Ter. 15. 18.

end, 'they would become infinite. What, then, will it be, they being both intolerable as to sharpness, and endless as to duration! Who can conceive how much it adds to grief, its being never to have an end! The torment of one hour is a great pain, that of two must be twice as much; the torment of a hundred hours must be a hundred times as much, and so on, the pain still increasing in proportion of the time of its duration. What, then, must that be, which is to last infinite hours, infinite days, infinite ages? That pain certainly must be infinite, and surpass all our thoughts to conceive it: for were it proposed to the damned to suffer either the sting of a bee in their eye for a whole eternity, or to undergo all the torments of hell for as many ages as there is stars in heaven, they would, without doubt, choose to be thus miserable for so many ages, and then to see an end of their misery, than to endure a pain so much less, that was to have no end. Every thing is short, and may be despised, that does not last for ever; because it will always be nothing for an eternity; "Quid enim potest grande esse quod habet finem," in *Psalm lxxxix*. "For what," says St. Jerome, "can be called great

that has an end." Whereas, that which never ends, can never be comprehended; therefore, cannot but be feared by all, unless it be by such who have lost their senses. The worst of it is, that the pain, as well as the sin, is devoured, and not digested by sinners. "Os impiorum devorat iniquitatem." *Prov. xix. 29.* "The mouth of the impious devours iniquity." And if so, let us take a little time, to measure this eternity, which surpasses all measure. Take an hour-glass into thy hand, and say thus to thyself: If I were to be buried alive in the middle of a fire, for as many thousand years as there are grains in this little parcel of sand, which measures the fleeting hours, when should I see an end of my pain? The world has lasted so long, and yet has not completed six thousand years, so that there would not as yet be above five grains taken away, which would not be more than some few atoms, in respect of the remaining quantity: and yet, if I die in mortal sin, I am obliged by faith to believe, that after having suffered all these ages, none of my pain due to it will be passed; and eternity will remain as entire as ever. Let us go on, and imagine to ourselves a

mountain of this small sand, so high as would reach from earth to heaven ; then let every one say to himself, Were I to continue in flames so many thousand years as there are grains of sand in this vast mountain, when should I ever see an end of my torments ? and yet, if I die in mortal sin, faith tells me, that, after all this, none of my pains due to it will be diminished, and that eternity will be as entire as ever. Let us, then, imagine this great mountain to be multiplied as often as there are sands in the sea, leaves on trees, feathers on birds, scales on fish, hairs on beasts, atoms in the air, drops of water that have rained, or will rain, to the day of judgment. What human understanding can ever comprehend so great a number, which can scarce be comprehended by an angel himself ? and yet, if either you, or I, should die in mortal sin, we are assured by faith, that we shall continue all this while in the fire ; and that all these years shall pass, and when over, none of our pain will be lessened, nor so much as one instant taken from eternity. O eternity, then, O eternity ! either sinners have no faith, or no senses ! Canst thou deny, that the living in sin is not exposing thyself to the danger of

falling into this abyss, from whence there is no getting out, for ever? Thou canst not deny it, if thou art a christian ; but, on the contrary, thou mayest say with truth, that by living thus, thou art not above one step off the abyss, or rather, have already one foot in it. “ *Uno tantum (ut ita dicam) gradu, ego morsque dividimur.*” *1 Reg. xx. 3.* “ By one degree only (as I may so say) I and death are divided.” Since, then, we may die every moment, we may also every moment be lost for ever. The exposing ourselves to such evident danger of burning for the space of a thousand years, on account of some vile and transitory pleasure, would undoubtedly be a very great madness : it would be a much greater to expose one-self to the danger of continuing ten thousand years. It would still be greater and greater, to expose ones-self to burn for an hundred thousand years. Will not, then, the exposing ourselves to burn for ever, for so small a trifle, be an infinite madness? “ *Post tantillam voluptatem, tam gravis miseria!*” *Bern. ad Fr. de mont. Dei.* “ After so small a pleasure, so great a misery!” says St. Bernard. “ It is enough,” says he, “ to make one mad to think of eternity.”

Whereas, it is quite otherwise ; for to think attentively of it, will make those that have lost their wits, to find them again.

IT IS UNCHANGEABLE.

II. CONSIDER, that if this succession of ages without end could in hell give any relief by variety, it would, on that score, be more tolerable ; but how can it be tolerable, it being to be always the same in torments ? Though the manna contained in itself all kinds of tastes, yet, we find the people of Israel grew tired of it in the desert. “ *Nihil aliud respeciunt oculi nostri, nisi manna.* ” *Num. xi. 6.* “ Our eyes,” say they, “ behold nothing else but manna.” And yet this, according to the interpreters, happened the second year only of their travels through the desert ; what would they have said at the end of forty or a hundred years ? Miserable sinners ! If that eternity, which waits for thee, should expect thee at a continual feast, but still of the same kinds of meat, thou wouldst at last grow so tired with it, that it were enough to cast thee into despair ; what then will thy despair be, seeing that eternity expects thee in a place of tor-

ment, always the same, with the same pains? You that cannot bear with a sermon unless it have some variety; nay, and what is more, you are even tired with a play that has not some interludes; how, then, will you be able to pass an eternity of misery, without ease, without change, without any comfort? Those who inhabit the torrid zone, though they are scorched with the burning sun-beams during the day, are at least refreshed in the night by cool breezes. A sick man may, after some fatigues, fall asleep for a little while, and during that time forget all his pains. There is no wound in this world, either in soul or body, which does not receive some ease from time; but to the damned, all these hopes are vain: they shall not only experience the scorching rays of the divine justice, but shall lay under the weight of his thunder-bolts; and shall never have either night, sleep, or time, to soften their pains. If these unhappy wretches could at least deceive themselves by the persuasion, that some time or other they should be eased, though it be never to happen, this might afford them some kind of comfort; but they cannot so much as do this, because God will have them constantly

to bear before their eyes the sentence of their eternal damnation, written in characters never to be blotted out, "ut videant semper," *Dan. xii. 2.* and never to be able, so much as one moment, to turn their thoughts from it. If to those that undergo any torment, every hour seems a day; how long will the misery of these poor souls appear, that will never be interrupted for infinite ages? These unfortunate creatures will not only be tormented for an eternity, but will have eternity itself to torment them; because, it being always in their sight, it will every moment oppress them with all its weight, as an immense sphere of brass would press with all its weight the plain it lies on, though it actually touched it but in one point. Besides, the fear of a punishment to come, afflicts oftentimes more than the punishment itself. "Peior est bello; timor ipse belli." "The fear of war is worse than the war itself." So that we may say that eternity not only every moment tortures the damned, but that to the damned every moment is turned into many eternities; "In perpetuas æternitates." *Dan. xii. 3.* For, since the evil is unavoidable, the expectation thereof is most certain, the

fear of it perhaps more cruel than any executioner, and anticipation every moment redoubles the pain. Thou hast a horror to read these things, and yet not to sin: if so, thou fearest a painted precipice, but fearest not to cast thyself from a real one.

IT IS JUST.

III. CONSIDER, that men reasoning always as men, are astonished, that God for so short a pleasure of a sinner, should have decreed an everlasting punishment in the fire of hell; nor do they know how to reconcile in their thoughts this rigour, either with divine goodness, which is so compassionate, or with the divine justice, which does not punish beyond reason. But ought not we rather to wonder at the astonishment of worldlings, grounded on the ignorance of spiritual things. “The sensual man perceiveth not the things that are of the Spirit of God, for it is a folly to him, and he cannot understand.” “Animalis homo non precipit ea, quæ sunt spiritus Dei: stultitia enim est illi et non potest intelligere.” 1 Cor. ii. 14. If sinners did but comprehend the malice of their sin, they would soon

change their wonder into one far greater. They are, at present, amazed how God could for one only fault make hell to be eternal, but when they come into the other world, they will wonder much more that he has not created a hell, and provided pains incomparably more cruel for every transgression. St. Augustine understood very well this truth, when he tells us: "Nunquam esset dæmonum æterna miseria, nisi esset magna malitia." *De Civit. l. 2. c. 13.* "The misery of the devils would never have been eternal, had not their malice been great." For otherwise it would not have been proportionable. Consider, therefore, that every mortal sin is either a tacit, or express contempt of the divine will, and an injury to God. Now an injury is increased on two accounts, either by the dignity of the person offended, or the vileness of the offender; the majesty, therefore, of God being infinite, and our vileness in the lowest degree, it follows, that the injury which we do him, is in a manner infinite; and is an abyss of malice, more detestable than all the injuries imaginable that can be done to creatures. The punishment, then, being to be proportioned to the sin, to re-establish the order

which was violated by it, ought also to be infinite; but since it cannot be infinite in intensesness, because a creature is not capable of it, it must be infinite in extension, and last for ever. This same truth will be better known, by considering that the malice of sin is so exorbitant as not to be atoned and satisfied for, by the good works of all creatures: and, therefore, to pay this debt, it was necessary the Son of God should take from his veins, as a just price, the treasures of his divine blood. *Less. de Perfect. Div. l. 13. n. 183. c. 26. n. 187.* That sin, then, which cannot be made amends for by any virtuous actions of creatures, though continued never so long, deserves a pain longer than any time, and, therefore, deserves one that is everlasting. So that God can never be despised by any but fools. Whereas, if the pain due to the offenders of God were to end, both the judge and the sentence would be contemned, “*Quod æternum non est, nihil est.*” “What is not eternal is nothing.” For what will be nothing for a whole eternity, may also be esteemed such at present. Thus they argue, who look upon the goodness of God, not as sinners do, as an indolent neglect of evil, but as an holi-

ness infinitely opposite to sin, to which it bears an infinite hatred, and is forced to demonstrate it to them, and punish it with a pain corresponding to it; that is, without end. And thus he weighs things, who makes use of scales of the divine justice, which cannot be mistaken; and not of the false scales of the world, equally deceived and deceiving. Consider, then, how great an evil one mortal sin is, since it contains an eternal misery, as it were, in its bowels; so that if thou canst penetrate with the eye of thy mind into that deep and wicked bottom, thou wouldest easily discover therein the seeds of an eternal fire, of eternal lamentation, of an eternal sorrow, of an eternal imprisonment, of an eternal stench, of an eternal despair, and of an eternal loss of all that is good. All this is contained in one sin: though the act be so short; yet, like unto the basilisk's egg, it contains a poisonous progeny, and more than one death. It may, therefore, be called hell itself, or rather an evil which infinitely surpasses it, in as much as can be spoken, or comprehended by us, and which is to be redoubled as many times in severity and pains, as the soul will be found to have sins when she leaves

this “land of misery and darkness; where the shadow of death is, and no order, but everlasting horror inhabits.” *Job x. 22.* “Terram miseria et tenebrarum; ubi umbra mortis, et nullus ordo, sed sempiternus horror inhabitat.” Hast thou ever seriously thought on this truth? “Intelexistis haec omnia?” “Have ye understood all these things?” *Matt. xiii. 15.* If thou hast thought of it, how is it possible, that for so vile, so filthy, and so short a pleasure, thou throwest thyself, by sinning so unconcernedly, into an abyss of sin, and as much as in thee lies, into an abyss of pain, which attends it? The precipice on thy side is unavoidable, if God, whom thou so frequently offendest, interposeth not his hand to keep thee from it: “Ah! thou hast not seen these things, thou hast not understood them.” If thou hast thought slightly of them, but not understood them, or if thou hast not thought of them at all, what art thou doing? “Quid tu sopore deprimeris, surge, invoca Deum tuum:” “Why art thou oppressed with sleep? Rise and call thy God.” *Jonas i. 6.* How canst thou rest in a state so near being shipwrecked? If the evil were only probable, and not certain from

faith, ought it not to make thee tremble every moment? Beg, then, of God to free thee from it. Have recourse to confession, fly from that wicked company, avoid the danger of sin, frequent the sacraments, do penance, retire, if necessary, from the world, to save thy soul. "No care can be too great where eternity is at stake." "Non potest esse nimia securitas, ubi periclitatur aeternitas." *Bern.*

A PRAYER

TO THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN, TO OBTAIN FOR US ETERNAL SALVATION.

O most bountiful mother of pity, as there is no creature comes nearer than thyself to the incomprehensible perfections of thy divine Son, so there is none comes so near to him as thou in that of mercy. The succouring me, poor wretch, in my greatest misery, and freeing me, by thy intercession, out of the abyss of my sins, and eternal damnation, which I had so justly deserved, will be an imitating him, who is all charity and compassion towards sinners. I know how much thou interests thyself in the glory of thy

Son, and how much thou desirest the salvation of souls he has redeemed, and that the fruit of his most sacred blood may daily increase. I fly, therefore, to thee, with full hopes, thou wilt not deny the assistance of thy prayers to him, for whom our Lord Jesus Christ laid down his very life. What should I do, were I condemned for ever to the flames of hell, never to behold the face of thine and my God, and to have for an eternity both him and thee for my enemies? But God forbid this ever to be true: free me, O gracious lady, by thy mediation, from an eternal death, obtain for me never to lie under that dismal sentence. I pretend no title to favour on my own account, as having no desert; but let it be entirely owing to thy intercession, to the merits of my Saviour, to his wounds, and to his death. Thou wert appointed by him, on the cross, for my advocate and mother, permit me, then, to call thee so. "Monstra te esse matrem," "Show thyself a mother;" make thyself heard in my behalf, and I am content; take me into thy protection, and I am secure. Obtain that I may never sin mortally, but faithfully serve my Creator and Redeemer to the very last, that I may en-

joy him for ever, and in company of all the
saints, make amends for what till now I
have been wanting in his service on earth.
Amen.

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